



# Local Health Departments Prepare for and Respond to Emergencies

Local health departments are the “boots on the ground” in preparing for, responding to, and recovering from public health emergencies such as disease outbreaks, natural and human-caused disasters, and terrorist attacks. Recent years have seen increased levels of severe weather, including hurricanes, extreme flooding, and damaging wildfires. People in communities across the nation want to know that in an emergency, the public health and health care sectors are ready to respond. The federal government provides support through the Public

Health Emergency Preparedness (PHEP) program and Hospital Preparedness Program (HPP). These complementary programs serve different purposes. PHEP supports local health departments’ response to public health threats and helps to build resilient communities. HPP enables health care systems to save lives during emergencies that exceed day-to-day capacity of health and emergency response systems. Local health departments play a role in convening partners through healthcare coalitions.

## NACCHO Recommendations

To save lives and money, the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) recommends the following in fiscal year (FY) 2020:

### Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

#### PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS GRANTS

FY19: \$675 million

President’s FY20 Budget: \$675 million

FY20 NACCHO Request: \$874 million

PHEP grants strengthen local and state public health departments’ capacity and capability to effectively respond to public health emergencies such as terrorist threats; infectious disease outbreaks; natural disasters; and biological, chemical, nuclear, and radiological emergencies. PHEP grants are awarded to 50 state, four city (Chicago, Los Angeles County, New York City, and Washington, DC), and eight territorial health departments. More than 55% of local health departments rely solely on federal funding for emergency preparedness.

### Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response, HHS

#### HOSPITAL PREPAREDNESS PROGRAM

FY19: \$265 million

President’s FY20 Budget: \$258 million

FY20 NACCHO Request: \$474 million

HPP provides funding to 50 state, four city (Chicago, Los Angeles County, New York City, and Washington, DC), and eight territorial health departments to enhance healthcare system planning and response at the state, local, regional, and territorial levels. HPP supports 476 health care coalitions (HCCs), which are formal collaborations among health care and public health focused on strengthening the ability of the health care system to respond in an emergency. As the only source of federal funding that supports regional health care system preparedness, HPP promotes a sustained national focus to improve patient outcomes, minimize the need for supplemental state and federal resources during emergencies, and enable rapid recovery.

#### MEDICAL RESERVE CORPS

FY19: \$6 million

President’s FY20 Budget: \$4 million

FY20 NACCHO Request: \$11 million

The Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) was created in 2002 after the 9/11 terrorist attacks. These highly skilled volunteer health professionals fill a critical role in increasing local health departments’ capacity to respond to emergencies. Two-thirds of the nation’s 1,000 MRC units are housed in local health departments. MRC has been cut by 45% since FY2013.

## Local Health Departments Protect the Public

Local health departments are the chief health strategists of their communities, often serving as the key convener of multiple health care and public sectors to ensure that all systems are prepared and coordinated to respond when disaster strikes. Local health departments perform the following functions to ensure the safety and well-being of America's communities in the face of potential public health emergencies:

### Mitigation

- Conduct research on best ways to reduce the risk to life and property.
- Issue guidance to the public on risks and ways they can stay safe.

### Preparedness

- Develop comprehensive disaster plans in collaboration with community partners.

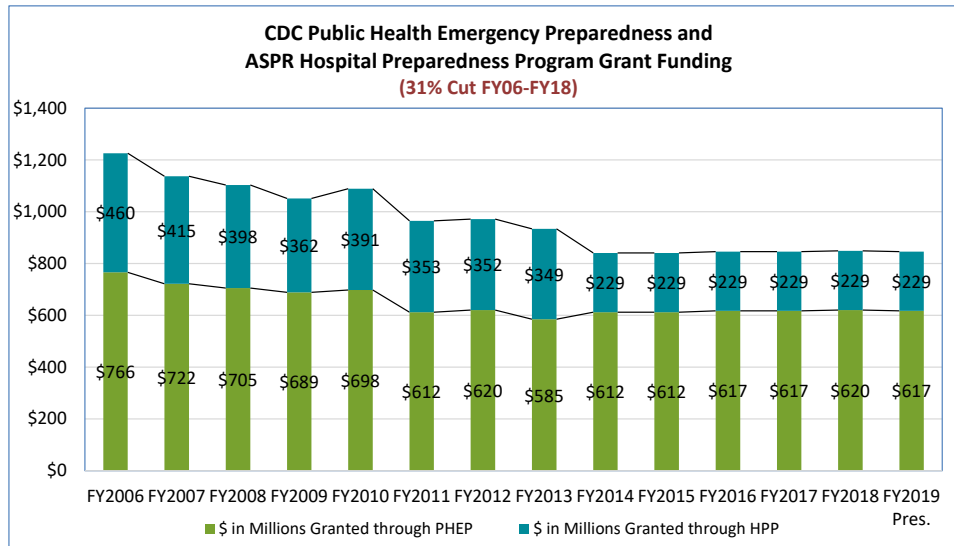
- Conduct trainings and exercises to improve emergency response capacity.
- Ready healthcare providers for medical surges.

### Response

- Evacuate the public during disasters.
- Mobilize and coordinate volunteer public health and healthcare professionals to limit injury and death.
- Provide immunizations to limit spread of infectious disease.
- Coordinate shelters and monitor health conditions.
- Reunite families who may be disconnected in an emergency.

### Recovery

- Rebuild critical public health infrastructure and services.
- Provide public health and mental/behavioral health services to assist community recovery efforts.
- Learn from emergencies and revise emergency plans.



### About NACCHO

The National Association of County and City Health Officials is the voice of nearly 3,000 local health departments across the country. These city, county, metropolitan, district, and tribal departments work every day to ensure the safety of the water we drink, the food we eat, and the air we breathe.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

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# NACCHO

National Association of County & City Health Officials

The National Connection for Local Public Health



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

The mission of the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) is to improve the health of communities by strengthening and advocating for local health departments.

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